

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

230240Z Dec 05

UNCLAS YEREVAN 002215

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR DRL AND EUR/CACEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: ARMENIA TO CRIMINALIZE EVASION OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

REF: YEREVAN 1958

1. (U) During an extraordinary session on December 16, the Armenian National Assembly unanimously adopted amendments to the Criminal Code that, for the first time in Armenian law, would criminalize evasion of alternative service. President Robert Kocharian has until January 6, 2006 to sign the amendments, which carry sentences of three years imprisonment (increased from two years) for convictions of evasion of both alternative and military service. Armenian courts currently convict conscientious objectors under military statutes, a process Jehovah's Witnesses argue violates the fundamental principles of international and Armenian alternative service laws (reftel).

2. (SBU) According to Yerevan-based Andre Carbonneau, a Canadian lawyer coordinating legal defense for the Jehovah's Witnesses, and local attorney Lyova Margaryan, as of December 21, 11 conscientious objectors affiliated with the Jehovah's Witnesses are awaiting trial and 33 are serving sentences (ranging from one to four years) for draft evasion and service desertion convictions.  
GODFREY